

## General Assembly

January Session, 2003

## Raised Bill No. 941

LCO No. 3357

Referred to Committee on Public Health

Introduced by: (PH)

## AN ACT CONCERNING CHANGES TO THE STATUTES REGARDING GUARDIANSHIP OF PERSONS WITH MENTAL RETARDATION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- Section 1. Section 45a-668 of the general statutes is repealed and the
- 2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2003*):
- 3 [Guardians of the property, and limited guardians of the property,
- 4 of persons who are not minors and who are mentally retarded persons,
- 5 appointed as such guardians or limited guardians under chapter 779a
- 6 prior to October 1, 1982, shall serve on or after October 1, 1982, as
- 7 conservators of the estates of such persons as if appointed conservators
- 8 under the provisions of sections 45a-644 to 45a-662, inclusive, and in
- 9 accordance with the provisions of said sections. Any guardian of the
- 10 person or property of a minor person who is mentally retarded,
- 11 appointed under chapter 779a, prior to October 1, 1982, may continue
- 12 to serve as such guardian on or after October 1, 1982, as if appointed
- 13 under and in accordance with the provisions of sections 45a-132, 45a-
- 14 593 to 45a-597, inclusive, 45a-603 to 45a-662, inclusive, 45a-629 to 45a-
- 15 638, inclusive, relative to guardians of minors. Such guardianship shall
- 16 terminate upon the minor reaching the age of eighteen. Continuation

17 of the guardianship of the estate shall be by application made pursuant 18 to the provisions of sections 45a-644 to 45a-662, inclusive. Continuation 19 of the guardianship of the person shall be by application made 20 pursuant to the provisions of sections 45a-668 to 45a-684, inclusive. 21 Any guardian of the person of a mentally retarded person who is not a 22 minor, appointed under chapter 779a prior to October 1, 1982, may 23 continue to serve as such guardian after October 1, 1982. Upon filing of 24 a periodic account by any guardian appointed under the provisions of 25 chapter 779a, prior to October 1, 1982, the court shall require a probate 26 bond in the same manner as under sections 45a-132, 45a-593 to 45a-597, 27 inclusive, 45a-603 to 45a-622, inclusive, 45a-629 to 45a-638, inclusive, or 28 45a-644 to 45a-662, inclusive. Failure to furnish a probate bond or 29 written acceptance of guardianship required under the provisions of 30 said sections, shall be cause for termination of the continued service of 31 the fiduciary provided for in this section.] All persons in this state 32 eighteen years of age and over, including persons with mental 33 retardation, are legally competent unless determined otherwise, and to 34 the extent limited, by a court, in accordance with the provisions of 35 sections 45a-668 to 45a-684, inclusive, as amended by this act, or as 36 otherwise provided by law.

- Sec. 2. Section 45a-669 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2003*):
- For purposes of sections 45a-668 to 45a-684, inclusive, <u>as amended</u> by this act, the following terms shall have the following meanings:
- 41 (a) "Plenary guardian of a [mentally retarded] person with mental 42 retardation" means a person, legally authorized state official, or private 43 nonprofit corporation, except a hospital or nursing home as defined in section 19a-521, appointed by a court of probate pursuant to the 44 45 provisions of sections 45a-668 to 45a-684, inclusive, as amended by this 46 act, to supervise all aspects of the care of an adult person, as 47 enumerated in subsection (d) of section 45a-677, as amended by this 48 act, for the benefit of such adult, who by reason of the severity of his

mental retardation, has been determined to be totally unable to meet essential requirements for his physical health or safety and totally unable to make informed decisions about matters related to his care.

- [(b) "Legally competent" means having the legal power to direct one's personal and financial affairs. All persons in this state eighteen years of age and over are legally competent unless determined otherwise by a court in accordance with the provisions of sections 45a-668 to 45a-684, inclusive, or unless otherwise provided by law.]
- 57 [(c)] (b) "Limited guardian of a [mentally retarded] person with 58 mental retardation" means a person, legally authorized state official, or 59 a private nonprofit corporation, except a hospital or nursing home as 60 defined in section 19a-521, appointed by a court of probate pursuant to 61 the provisions of sections 45a-668 to 45a-684, inclusive, as amended by 62 this act, to supervise certain specified aspects of the care of an adult 63 person, as enumerated in subsection (d) of section 45a-677, as amended by this act, for the benefit of such adult, who by reason of the severity 64 65 of his mental retardation, has been determined to be able to do some, 66 but not all, of the tasks necessary to meet essential requirements for his 67 physical health or safety or to make some, but not all, informed 68 decisions about matters related to his care.
  - [(d) "Mentally retarded person] (c) "Person with mental retardation" means a person who has a condition defined as mental retardation pursuant to section 1-1g.
- [(e)] (d) "Respondent" means an adult person for whom an application for guardianship or limited guardianship of the person has been filed.
  - [(f)] (e) "Unable to meet essential requirements for his physical health or safety" means the inability through one's own efforts and through acceptance of assistance from family, friends and other available private and public sources, to meet one's needs for medical care, nutrition, clothing, shelter, hygiene or safety so that, in the

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absence of a guardian of the [mentally retarded] person <u>with mental</u> retardation serious physical injury, illness or disease is likely to occur.

- [(g)] (f) "Unable to make informed decisions about matters related to one's care" means the inability of a [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation to achieve a rudimentary understanding, after conscientious efforts at explanation, of information necessary to make decisions about his need for physical or mental health care, food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, protection from physical abuse or harm, or other care.
- [(h)] (g) "Ward" means a person for whom a guardianship is granted under sections 45a-668 to 45a-684, inclusive, as amended by this act.
- 91 Sec. 3. Section 45a-672 of the general statutes is repealed and the 92 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2003*):
  - The notice required by subsection (a) of section 45a-671 shall inform such respondent of (1) whether the guardianship sought is a plenary or a limited guardianship and that the court, notwithstanding which type of guardianship is sought, may appoint a plenary guardian or a limited guardian of the [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation with such limitations as the court determines; (2) the legal consequences of both plenary and limited guardianships; (3) the facts alleged in the application and the limitations on the guardian's authority, if any, specifically applied for; and (4) the right to be represented by counsel.
- Sec. 4. Section 45a-674 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2003*):
- At any hearing for appointment of a plenary guardian or limited guardian of the [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation, the court shall receive evidence as to the condition of the respondent, including a written report or testimony by a Department of Mental Retardation assessment team appointed by the Commissioner of

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110 Mental Retardation or his designee, no member of which is related by 111 blood, marriage or adoption to either the applicant or the respondent 112 and each member of which has personally observed or examined the 113 respondent within forty-five days next preceding such hearing. The 114 assessment team shall be comprised of at least three representatives 115 from among appropriate disciplines having expertise in the evaluation 116 of persons alleged to be mentally retarded. The assessment team 117 members shall make their report on a form provided for that purpose 118 by the Office of the Probate Court Administrator and shall answer 119 questions on such form as fully and completely as possible. The report 120 shall contain specific information regarding the severity of the mental 121 retardation of the respondent and those specific areas, if any, in which 122 he needs the supervision and protection of a guardian, and shall state 123 upon the form the reasons for such opinions. The applicant, 124 respondent or his counsel shall have the right to present evidence and 125 cross-examine witnesses who testify at any hearing on the application. 126 If such respondent or his counsel notifies the court not less than three 127 days before the hearing that he wishes to cross-examine the witnesses, 128 the court shall order such witnesses to appear. The fees for such 129 assessment team shall be paid from funds appropriated to the 130 Department of Mental Retardation.

- Sec. 5. Section 45a-676 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2003*):
  - (a) If the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, that the respondent is, by reason of the severity of his mental retardation, totally unable to meet essential requirements for his physical health or safety and totally unable to make informed decisions about matters related to his care, the court shall appoint a plenary guardian or plenary coguardians of the [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation who shall have all those powers and duties provided for in section 45a-677, as amended by this act.
- (b) If the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the

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- 142 respondent is able to do some, but not all, of the tasks necessary to 143 meet essential requirements for his physical health or safety or that the 144 respondent is able to make some, but not all, informed decisions about 145 matters related to his care, the court shall appoint a limited guardian 146 or limited coguardians of the [mentally retarded] person with mental 147 retardation.
- 148 (c) For purposes of sections 45a-668 to 45a-784, inclusive, as 149 amended by this act, and section 46b-29, any alleged inability of the 150 respondent must be evidenced by recent behavior which would cause 151 harm or create a risk of harm, by clear and convincing proof.
  - (d) The court shall take from any such plenary guardian or limited guardian a written acceptance of such guardianship and, if the court deems it necessary for the protection of the respondent, a probate bond.
  - (e) The court shall make written findings of fact which support each grant of authority to the plenary guardian or limited guardian. If the court in reaching its conclusion is relying on incidents of behavior which occurred more than six months prior to the date of hearing, the court findings shall include its reasoning for relying upon such incidents.
  - (f) In selecting a plenary guardian or limited guardian of the [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation, the court shall be guided by the best interests of the respondent, including, but not limited to, the preference of the respondent as to who should be appointed as plenary guardian or limited guardian. No person shall be excluded from serving as a plenary guardian or limited guardian solely because he is employed by the Department of Mental Retardation, except that (1) no such employee may be appointed as a plenary guardian or limited guardian of a [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation residing in a state-operated residential facility for the mentally retarded located in the Department of Mental Retardation region in which such person is employed; and (2) no such

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- Sec. 6. Section 45a-677 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2003*):
  - (a) The court may assign to a limited guardian of a [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation any portion of the duties and powers listed in subsection (d) of this section for those particular areas in which the respondent lacks the capacity to meet the essential requirements for such respondent's physical or mental health or safety.
  - (b) A limited guardian may also be assigned the duty to assist the respondent in those particular areas in which the capacity of the respondent to meet the essential requirements of such respondent's physical or mental health or safety, protect such respondent's rights, obtain necessary services, or to fulfill such respondent's civil duties is impaired, as well as in other ways not specifically prohibited by sections 45a-668 to 45a-684, inclusive, as amended by this act.
  - (c) A limited guardian of a [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation shall have only such of the duties and responsibilities and powers of a guardian of a [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation under subsection (d) of this section as the court shall specify based upon its findings with regard to the individual need of the respondent for supervision. The guardian shall have the duty to report to the probate court which appointed such limited guardian at least annually the condition of the respondent. The preceding duties, responsibilities and powers shall be carried out within the limitations of the resources available to the ward, either through the ward's own

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- (d) The court may assign to a limited guardian the custody of the ward for the purpose of exercising any, but not all, of the following limited duties and powers, in order to assist the ward in achieving self-reliance: (1) To assure and consent to a place of abode outside the natural family home, (2) to consent to specifically designed educational, vocational or behavioral programs, (3) to consent to the release of clinical records and photographs, (4) to assure and consent to routine, elective and emergency medical and dental care, and (5) other specific limited powers to assure and consent to services necessary to develop or regain to the maximum extent possible the ward's capacity to meet essential requirements. All plenary guardians and limited guardians appointed pursuant to sections 45a-668 to 45a-684, inclusive, as amended by this act, shall also have a duty to assure the care and comfort of the ward within the limitations of their appointment, and within the limitations of the resources available to the ward either through the ward's own estate or by reason of private or public assistance.
- (e) A plenary guardian or limited guardian of a [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation shall not have the power or authority: (1) To cause the ward to be admitted to any institution for treatment of the mentally ill, except in accordance with the provisions of sections 17a-75 to 17a-83, inclusive, 17a-456 to 17a-484, inclusive, 17a-495 to 17a-528, inclusive, 17a-540 to 17a-550, inclusive, 17a-560 to 17a-576, inclusive, 17a-615 to 17a-618, inclusive, and 17a-621 to 17a-664, inclusive, and chapter 420b; (2) to cause the ward to be admitted to any training school or other facility provided for the care and training of the mentally retarded if there is a conflict concerning such admission between the guardian and the [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation or next of kin, except in accordance with the provisions of sections 17a-274 and 17a-275; (3) to consent on behalf of the ward to a sterilization, except in accordance with the provisions of sections 45a-690 to 45a-700, inclusive; (4) to consent on behalf of the ward to

239 psychosurgery, except in accordance with the provisions of section 240 17a-543; (5) to consent on behalf of the ward to the termination of the 241 ward's parental rights, except in accordance with the provisions of 242 sections 45a-706 to 45a-709, inclusive, 45a-715 to 45a-718, inclusive, 45a-724 to 45a-737, inclusive, and 45a-743 to 45a-757, inclusive; (6) to 243 244 consent on behalf of the ward to the performance of any experimental 245 biomedical or behavioral medical procedure or participation in any 246 biomedical or behavioral experiment, unless it is (A) intended to 247 preserve the life or prevent serious impairment of the physical health 248 of the ward, (B) it is intended to assist the ward to regain the ward's 249 abilities and has been approved for the ward by the court, or (C) has 250 been (i) approved by a recognized institutional review board, as 251 defined by 45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 50 and 21 CFR 56, as amended from time 252 to time, and which is not a part of the Department of Mental 253 Retardation, (ii) endorsed or supported by the Department of Mental 254 Retardation, and (iii) approved for the ward by such ward's primary 255 care physician; (7) to admit the ward to any residential facility 256 operated by an organization by whom such guardian is employed, 257 except in accordance with the provisions of section 17a-274; (8) to 258 prohibit the marriage or divorce of the ward; and (9) to consent on 259 behalf of the ward to an abortion or removal of a body organ, except in 260 accordance with applicable statutory procedures when necessary to 261 preserve the life or prevent serious impairment of the physical or 262 mental health of the ward.

(f) A plenary guardian or limited guardian shall submit a report to the court: (1) Annually; (2) when the court orders additional reports to be filed; or (3) when there is a significant change in the capacity of the ward to meet the essential requirements for the ward's physical health or safety; (4) when the plenary guardian or limited guardian resigns or is removed; and (5) when the guardianship is terminated.

(g) Such reports shall be submitted on a form provided by the Office of the Probate Court Administrator and shall contain the following information: (1) Significant changes in the capacity of the ward to meet

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272 the essential requirements for the ward's physical health or safety; (2) 273 the services being provided to the ward and the relationship of those 274 services to the individual guardianship plan; (3) the significant actions 275 taken by the limited guardian of a [mentally retarded] person with 276 mental retardation or plenary guardian of a [mentally retarded] person 277 with mental retardation during the reporting period; (4) any significant 278 problems relating to the guardianship which have arisen during the 279 reporting period; and (5) whether such guardianship, in the opinion of 280 the guardian, should continue, be modified, or be terminated, and the 281 reasons therefor.

- (h) When any [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation for whom a guardian has been appointed becomes a resident of any town in the state in a probate district other than the one in which a guardian was appointed, or becomes a resident of any town in the state to which the guardianship file has been transferred under this section, such court in that district may, upon motion of any person deemed by the court to have sufficient interest in the welfare of the respondent, including, but not limited to, the guardian, the Commissioner of Mental Retardation or the commissioner's designee, or a relative of the person under guardianship, transfer the file to the probate district in which the person under guardianship resides at the time of the application, provided the transfer is in the best interest of the [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation. A transfer of the file shall be accomplished by the probate court in which the guardianship matter is on file by making copies of all documents in the court and certifying each of them and then causing them to be delivered to the court for the district in which the person under guardianship resides. When the transfer is made, the court of probate in which the person under guardianship resides at the time of transfer shall thereupon assume jurisdiction over the guardianship and all further accounts shall be filed with such court.
- (i) A plenary guardian or limited guardian of a [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation and, to the extent appropriate, such

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305 person shall be the primary decision maker with respect to programs 306 needed by such person and policies and practices affecting the well-307 being of such person within the authority granted by the court 308 pursuant to this section, provided any such decision does not conflict with the requirements of section 17a-238. In making any such decision, 309 310 the plenary guardian or limited guardian shall consult with the ward 311 and appropriate members of the ward's family, where possible. A 312 limited guardian shall be the primary decision maker only with respect 313 to such duties assigned to the limited guardian by the court. The 314 provisions of this subsection shall be included in any court order 315 appointing a plenary guardian or limited guardian of a [mentally 316 retarded person with mental retardation.

Sec. 7. Section 45a-678 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2003*):

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- Any plenary guardian or limited guardian of the [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation serving in accordance with the provisions of sections 45a-668 to 45a-684, inclusive, as amended by this act, may be removed by the court of probate which appointed such guardian and another person appointed guardian of the [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation if the court of probate making such appointment, after notice and hearing as required in section 45a-671, finds such removal and appointment of a new plenary guardian or limited guardian of the [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation to be in the best interest of the respondent. In the event an application for removal has been filed under this section, the attorney of record for the respondent shall have access to all of the records of the respondent.
- Sec. 8. Section 45a-679 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2003*):
- If a ward has both a plenary guardian or limited guardian of the [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation and a conservator of the estate or person or a temporary conservator who are not the

same person and a conflict arises between the two concerning the duties and responsibilities or authority of either, the matter shall be submitted to the court of probate making the appointment of such guardian or conservator and such court shall, after a hearing, order the course of action which in its discretion is in the best interest of the ward.

Sec. 9. Section 45a-680 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2003*):

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Whenever a court of probate appoints a plenary guardian or limited guardian of the [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation, such court may appoint a standby plenary guardian or a standby limited guardian of the [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation. Such standby shall act if the appointed plenary guardian or limited guardian of the [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation dies, becomes incapable, or renounces his plenary guardianship or limited guardianship. The standby plenary guardian or standby limited guardian shall immediately inform the court of probate which has jurisdiction over such guardianship of his assumption of the guardianship and the reason therefor. The standby guardian, in the event of the guardian's death, incapacity or renunciation, shall, upon furnishing a probate bond if such a bond had been required from the plenary guardian or limited guardian whose duties are being assumed, but without further proceedings, be empowered to assume the duties of his office immediately upon the death or adjudication of incompetency of the plenary guardian of the person or limited guardian of the person of the [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation, subject only to confirmation of his appointment by the court of probate within sixty days following assumption of his duties of office.

- Sec. 10. Section 45a-681 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2003*):
- 368 (a) The court shall review each guardianship of the [mentally

retarded] person with mental retardation or limited guardianship of the [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation at least every three years and shall either continue, modify or terminate the order for guardianship. The court shall receive and review written evidence as to the condition of the ward. The guardian, the attorney for the ward and a Department of Mental Retardation professional or, if requested by the ward or by the court, an assessment team appointed by the Commissioner of Mental Retardation or his designee shall each submit a written report to the court within forty-five days of the court's request for such report. If the ward is unable to request or obtain an attorney, the court shall appoint an attorney for the ward. If the ward is unable to pay for the services of the attorney, the reasonable compensation of such attorney shall be established by, and paid from funds appropriated to, the Judicial Department; however, if funds have not been included in the budget of the Judicial Department for such purposes, such compensation shall be established by the Probate Court Administrator and paid from the Probate Court Administration Fund. The Department of Mental Retardation professional or assessment team shall personally observe or examine the ward within the forty-five-day period preceding the date of submission of its report.

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(b) If the court determines, after receipt of the reports from the attorney for the ward, the Department of Mental Retardation professional or assessment team and the guardian, that there has been no change in the condition of the ward since the last preceding review by the court, a hearing on the condition of the ward shall not be required, but the court, in its discretion, may hold such hearing. If the attorney for the ward, the Department of Mental Retardation professional or assessment team or the guardian requests a hearing, the court shall hold a hearing within thirty days of such request. No order expanding or reducing the powers and responsibilities of a guardian shall be issued unless such hearing is held.

Sec. 11. Section 45a-683 of the general statutes is repealed and the

following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2003*):

Any plenary guardian of a [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation, temporary limited guardian or limited guardian of a [mentally retarded] person with mental retardation who acts in good faith or pursuant to order of a court of probate pursuant to the provisions of sections 45a-668 to 45a-684, inclusive, as amended by this act, shall be immune from civil liability, except that such immunity shall not extend to gross negligence.

Sec. 12. Section 45a-684 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2003*):

All fees and expenses incurred under sections 45a-668 to 45a-684, inclusive, <u>as amended by this act</u>, except as otherwise provided, shall be paid pursuant to [subsections (i) and (j) of section 45a-105] <u>sections</u> 45a-106 and 45a-111.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	October 1, 2003
Sec. 2	October 1, 2003
Sec. 3	October 1, 2003
Sec. 4	October 1, 2003
Sec. 5	October 1, 2003
Sec. 6	October 1, 2003
Sec. 7	October 1, 2003
Sec. 8	October 1, 2003
Sec. 9	October 1, 2003
Sec. 10	October 1, 2003
Sec. 11	October 1, 2003
Sec. 12	October 1, 2003

## Statement of Purpose:

To make certain changes to the statutes regarding guardianship of persons with mental retardation and to correct a cross-reference.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]

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